

to the editor

Humanistic therapy

I have a number of questions concerning Dr. Laing's "humanistic" approach to therapy (SN: 5/15/71, p. 335). He says that "mystification of experience" stands in the way of recovering one's "wholeness," that we must experience "self-actualization" and "realization of self" and that we must perceive the illusory nature of the ego. Isn't this only a different type of mystification of experience or of life? Has Zen Buddhism influenced Laing's thinking as well as Perls'?

Even if Laing were familiar with the highest form of Buddhism and realized that one aspect of the essence of life (Santai) consisted of our ever-changing emotions, desires, thoughts and ambitions (Ku-tai), our everchanging physical body (Ke-tai), and our permanent self or our "I" (Chu-tai) which remains "I" throughout our life regardless of the other changes we experience, and that each of these aspects contain the other two, then he would still be lacking the wisdom, power and methodology to enable the masses to discover and to create new and higher value, wisdom, mercy and happiness on a daily basis throughout the remainder of their lives. Such a methodology exists in Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism.

Laing speaks of discovering the "real self" but can he define what a "real self" is? Isn't a person's ability to make himself unhappy just as much a part of his "real self" as is his ability to make himself more happy?

Even though Perls' and Laing's insights strike deeper into life than most peoples' a glance at Laing's picture points out that there are many doors to unlocking happiness in life for which he has no keys.

James L. Nammack Jr.
Hyattsville, Md.

(*Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism is a highly popular sect in Japan which has caught on elsewhere, including the United States.—Ed.*)

Your article, "A new look at the meaning of reality," was interesting, but uninformed. Some criticisms: These ideas are not so new, at least when compared with what you call "traditional behaviorism." You seem to be trying to give the impression that these humanistic psychologists are emotional rebels against staid, sane and scientific traditionalists like Skinner, and that a theory is just now being created for them.

Kurt Goldstein (*The Organism*) apparently coined the phrase "self actual-

ization," which was central to Maslow's very biological but also social psychology. Whitehead and the Gestalt psychologists showed several decades ago that consciousness shouldn't be thrown out of biology and psychology. Carl Rogers (e.g., *Client-Centered Therapy*, 1951) did very coherent theoretical (as well as sound empirical) work which led to the interest in group therapy and the awareness of the social implications of therapy. Merleau-Ponty and Michael Polanyi have provided very broad critiques of the pseudo-objectivity that Laing refers to.

Raymond Peat
Blake College
Eugene, Ore.

Hospital salaries

Dr. Ian Murphy's letter (SN: 5/1/71, p. 296) is absolutely correct. For years we have been asking skilled technical personnel—many of them college graduates—to work at hourly rates at or below those of unskilled labor in many communities. Those days are gone—hopefully forever—in many hospitals.

The patient has every right to expect the finest care and diagnostic competence that the hospital can provide. To do this the hospital must be able to pay wages in competition with other fields to attract competent personnel.

Would you want \$2 per hour personnel responsible for performing procedures on which your life might depend when the local rate for unskilled labor is \$3 per hour? Think it over!

Russell L. Malcolm Jr., M.D.
The Middletown
Hospital Association
Middletown, Ohio

Alcohol for autos

The insolent chariots (SN: 5/15/71, p. 329) are proliferating so fast that we will soon be able to cover our grand nation with concrete and 20-gauge metal-covered behemoths.

I urgently request that you devote time and print to articles that shed light on the subject of nonpolluting fuel such as alcohol.

Put a nonpolluting fire under some of the capable people in the world to take a good look at one of the simplest of solutions to one of our huge problems.

William Lynn
David Lynn Machine, Inc.
Dallas, Tex.

Address communications to Editor,
Science News, 1719 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

books OF THE WEEK

THE COLLEGE BOARD ADMISSIONS TESTING PROGRAM: A Technical Report on Research and Development Activities Relating to the Scholastic Aptitude Test and Achievement Tests—William H. Angoff, Ed.—College Entrance Exam. Bd., 1971, 181 p., diagrams, tables, \$5. Examination of the nature and value of the techniques used in "the College Boards."

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL: Priorities, Policies and the Law—Frank P. Grad, George W. Rathjens and Albert J. Rosenthal—Columbia Univ. Press, 1971, 311 p., \$9. Study presents choices for a Federal environmental policy and explores how national goals can be achieved within the federal-state structure and a legal system of rules and sanctions.

PLANT SPECIATION:—Verne Grant—Columbia Univ. Press, 1971, 435 p., illus., \$15. A synthesis of many research findings, the book describes evolutionary processes and patterns across the board in higher plants as they occur in various diverse types of genetic systems.

THE RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION:—Jerome S. Bruner; Anita Gil, Ed.—Norton, 1971, 175 p., \$5.95. Built around essays written during the period between 1964 and 1970, concerning the direction, the conflicts and the current state of crisis in American education.

SCIENTIFIC MANPOWER: A Dilemma for Graduate Education—Sanborn C. Brown and Brian B. Schwartz, Eds.—M.I.T. Press, 1971, 180 p., \$6.95. Study deals with manpower projections, national planning, research and university finances, and the implications for students and graduate education.

SECRETS OF THE GREAT PYRAMID:—Peter Tompkins, with appendix by Livio Catullo Stecchini—Harper, 416 p., 350 illus. \$12.50. Well-researched examination of the historical facts connected with the building of the pyramid of Cheops, and the scientific theories, mathematics, geodesy, astronomical knowledge and astrological doctrines they convey. Appended with notes on the relation of ancient measures to the pyramid.

TOUCHING: The Human Significance of the Skin—Ashley Montagu—Columbia Univ. Press, 1971, 338 p., diagrams, \$8.95. An inquiry into the importance of tactile experience in the development of the person. Presents the findings of science about the manner in which tactile experience or its lack affects the development of behavior.

UNDERSTANDING LIGHTNING:—Martin A. Uman—Bek Technical Pubns., 1971, 166 p., 52 illus., \$6.50. Nontechnical explanation of the scientific aspects of the natural phenomenon of lightning, answers specific questions in layman's language.

WATER: The Wonder of Life—Rutherford Platt—Prentice-Hall, 1971, 274 p., photographs, drawings by Stanley Wyatt, \$8.95. Scientific and highly readable essays on diverse aspects of water, from molecule to the teaming life in the oceans, from snow and glaciers to thermal pollution.

WATER AND WATER POLLUTION HANDBOOK, Vol. 1—Leonard L. Ciaccio, Ed.—Dekker, 1971, 449 p., diagrams, maps, \$27.50. Treatise reflects multidisciplinary approach to water and water systems. This first of four volumes deals with the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of water resources, estuaries, irrigation and soil water, wastes and effluents.

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